



1-18-00 09/46300PCT #

Docket No: 7387

Box Patent Application
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

520 Rec'd PCT/PIO 18 JAN 2000

Sir:

**Transmittal Letter to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US)
Concerning a Filing Under 35 U.S.C. § 371**

International Application No. PCT/US98/14775
International Filing Date: 16 July 1998
Priority Date Claimed: July 17, 1997

Inventor(s): Allen W. Thorpe, Edward W. Taylor, Jr., and Rubin Feldman
For: (AS AMENDED) THERMAL PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES AND
METHODS OF MAKING THEM

Applicants herewith submit to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information.

This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. § 371.

A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest priority date.

A copy of the International Application as filed is not required as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).

Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. § 371(c)(3)) have not been made and will not be made.

- ☒ A Declaration and Power of Attorney of the inventors.
- ☒ A copy of the International Preliminary Examination Report and its Annexes (PCT/IPEA/409).
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement, Form PTO-1449, and copies of references.
- ☒ Assignment of the invention to: Nu-Chem, Inc.; cover sheet and check for \$40.
- ☒ Small Entity Declaration (Small Business Concern).
- ☒ A **FIRST** preliminary Amendment.

35 U.S.C. § 371 of PCT/US98/14775

Docket No: 7387

☒ A Petition to Remove an Inventor (Provisional), with Assent of Assignee and check for \$130.

☒ Certificate of Mailing by Express Mail.

CLAIMS AS FILED

International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) \$335.00

CLAIMS Number Filed: Number Extra Rate

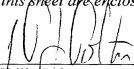
Total Claims 31 - 20 = 11 x \$9 \$99.00

Indep. Claims 6 - 3 = 3 x \$39 \$117.00

Total Filing Fee: \$551.00

☒ Checks in the amount of \$551.00 to cover the filing fee, \$40 to cover the assignment fee, and \$130 to cover the petition fee are enclosed.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit overpayment under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required by this paper to Deposit Account 16-2201. *Duplicate copies of this sheet are enclosed.*


J. Philip Polster

Registration No: 24,739

35 U.S.C. § 371 of PCT/US98/14775

Docket No: 7387

☒ A Petition to Remove an Inventor (Provisional), with Assent of Assignee and check for \$130.

☒ Certificate of Mailing by Express Mail.

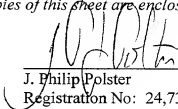
CLAIMS AS FILED

International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) \$335.00

CLAIMS	Number Filed:	Number Extra	Rate	
Total Claims	31 - 20 =	11 x	\$9	\$99.00
Indep. Claims	6 - 3 =	3 x	\$39	\$117.00
Total Filing Fee:				\$551.00

☒ Checks in the amount of \$551.00 to cover the filing fee, \$40 to cover the assignment fee, and \$130 to cover the petition fee are enclosed.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit overpayment under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required by this paper to Deposit Account 16-2201. *Duplicate copies of this sheet are enclosed.*



J. Philip Polster

Registration No: 24,739

Applicant: Allen W. Thorpe, et al.

Attorney's Docket No.: 7387

Serial No.:

Filed:

For: (AS AMENDED) THERMAL PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES AND MEHTODS
OF MAKING THEM

VERIFIED STATEMENT (DECLARATION) CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS
(37 CFR 1.9(f) and 1.27(c)) - SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN

I hereby declare that I am

- ☐ the owner of the small business concern identified below:
☒ an official of the small business concern empowered to act
on behalf of the concern identified below:

NAME OF CONCERN Nu-Chem, Inc.

ADDRESS OF CONCERN 2200 Cassens Dr., Fenton, Missouri 63026

I hereby declare that the above identified small business concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 13 CFR 121.3-18, and reproduced in 37 CFR 1.9(d), for purposes of paying reduced fees under section 41(a) and (b) of Title 35, United States Code, in that the number of employees of the concern, including those of its affiliates, does not exceed 500 persons. For purposes of this statement, (1) the number of employees of the business concern is the average over the previous fiscal year of the concern of the persons employed on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis during each of the pay periods of the fiscal year, and (2) concerns are affiliates of each other when either, directly or indirectly, one concern controls or has the power to control the other, or a third party or parties controls or has the power to control both.

I hereby declare that rights under contract or law have been conveyed to and remain with the small business concern identified above with regard to the invention, entitled : (AS AMENDED) THERMAL PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES AND MEHTODS OF MAKING THEM, by inventor(s) Allen W. Thorpe, et al, described in

- (X) the Specification filed herewith.
☐ Application Serial No. _____, filed _____.
☐ Patent No. _____, issued _____.

If the rights held by the above identified small business concern are not exclusive, each individual, concern or organization having rights to the invention is listed below and no rights to the invention are held by any person, other than the inventor, who could not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d) or by any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d) or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e).

FULL NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

() INDIVIDUAL () SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN () NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b))

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application, any patent issuing thereon, or any patent to which this verified statement is directed.

NAME OF PERSON SIGNING Rubin Feldman

TITLE OF PERSON President

ADDRESS OF PERSON SIGNING 28 Somerset Downs, Ladue, MO 63124

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

1-12-00

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: Allen W. Thorpe, et al. GROUP:
SERIAL NO.: EXAMINER:
FILED: DOCKET NO.: 7387

FOR: (AS AMENDED) THERMAL PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES
AND METHODS OF MAKING THEM

35 U.S.C. § 371 of PCT/US98/14775, filed July 16, 1998

St. Louis, Missouri
January 14, 2000

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Please amend the above-identified application before calculation of the filing fee
as follows:

INVENTORSHIP

Remove Malkit S. Deogon as an inventor of the present application.

SPECIFICATION

Page 1, amend the title to read: ---THERMAL PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES
AND METHODS OF MAKING THEM---; same page, before "Technical Field" please
insert:

---Cross-reference to related applications

This is a national phase (35 U.S.C. § 371) of PCT/US98/14775, filed July 16, 1998, which is a continuation-in-part of Serial No. 08/895,918, filed July 17, 1997, now United States Patent No. 6,001,437.---

CLAIMS

Cancel claims 1-9, 20, 21, 28-34, and 37-40.

52. (amended) A composite structure comprising a substrate, the substrate being formed at least in part of a polyolefin, and a mesh fabric treated with an active thermal protective material, the thermal protective material being selected from the group consisting of subliming and intumescent materials, the treated mesh fabric having from 0.5 to 30 openings per square centimeter, the [resin] substrate adhering chemically and mechanically to the pretreated mesh fabric.

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 20, 21, 28-34, and 37-40 have been cancelled by this preliminary amendment. Corresponding claims have been issued in the parent case, now United States Patent 6,001,437. Malkit S. Deogon is not an inventor of any of the remaining claims. He has therefore been removed. A petition, \$130 fee (37 C.F.R. § 1.17(i)), and consent of assignee are all attached hereto. If the petition is unnecessary, it is requested that the fee be refunded to account no. 16-2201.

Claims 10-19, 22-27, 35-36, and 41-53 are presently pending in this application.

In the Preliminary Examination Report, claims 25-27, and 41-48 have been indicated as meeting all criteria of the PCT. It is therefore believed that these claims should be allowable.

Independent claims 10, 35, 49, and 52 are directed to composite materials or structures comprising a thermoplastic and a fabric coated with an active thermal protective material selected from the group consisting of subliming and intumescent materials, the coated fabric being embedded in or otherwise adhered to the thermoplastic. In the PCT Preliminary Examination Report, the Examiner has indicated that these claims lack an inventive step over either Freeman et al or Seizert, in view of Horrocks et al. It is respectfully submitted that this position is unfounded.

Horrocks et al. teaches a special fabric which is itself a fire barrier, for use in such applications as fire protective clothing and aircraft seat cushions. The fabric is contrasted with a "quite different approach" to render materials resistant to fire by applying an intumescent coating, which cannot be used on all substrates or where flexibility is essential (col. 1, line 66 to col. 2, line 11). The Horrocks et al. barrier fabric material comprises an intimate mixture of organic intumescent filler and fibres, both adapted to char intensely within a particular temperature range. (Col. 2, lines 20-23.) The composite fabric preferably includes facing layers and a core made of the filler and fibres. The preferred core material is a non-woven fabric structure. At column 3, lines 33-48, Horrocks says:

During manufacture of the materials of the present invention, the intumescent should be applied to the fibre assembly in a manner which allows it to penetrate into the core of the assembly (as opposed to forming an exterior coating). Thus in one example, the intumescent is simply sprinkled in powder form on to a nonwoven, woven or knitted fabric core of the composite structure. Alternatively, it may be introduced between different layers of the fibres during assembly of the core. Other ways of dispersing the intumescent in the fibrous layer may also be applicable e.g. spraying in the intumescent during the formation of a fibrous felt.

Optionally, the intumescent powder is initially bonded to the fibres by an adhesive. Alternatively, an initial fibre-intumescent adhesion may be achieved by introducing a fusible adhesive copolymer into the intumescent.

In the Horrocks et al. system, the fibers may optionally be "precoated" with an adhesive to hold the intumescent on the fibers, but the resulting structure is not a "fibrous reinforcing material." The function of the fabric is to act as a barrier, not to reinforce anything.

Applicants readily concede that coating a fabric with an active thermal protective composition has long been known. Fiberglass fabric is routinely embedded in thermal protective coating compositions to give the coating strength in normal use and in case of a fire. For example, U.S. Patent 4,493,945, to Feldman (one of the inventors of the present application) teaches that when thermal protective coating materials (such as intumescent and subliming coatings) are applied to substrates, a reinforcing material such as fiberglass mesh has been embedded in the coating material to strengthen the material and prevent it from cracking or falling off the substrate under conditions of flame or thermal extreme. That patent further states that,

Sometimes the materials are first applied to a reinforcing structure such as a flexible tape or flexible wire mesh, and the combined structure is applied to the substrate. Examples of this approach are found in Feldman, U.S. Pat. No. 3,022,190, Pedlow, U.S. Pat. No. 4,018,962, Peterson et al, U.S. Pat. No. 4,064,359, Castle, U.S. Pat. No. 4,276,332, and Fryer et al, U.S. Pat. No. 4,292,358. In these last-mentioned systems, the purpose of the reinforcing structure may be both to strengthen the resulting composite and to permit its application to a substrate without directly spraying, troweling or painting the uncured coating materials onto the substrate. In any of the foregoing methods and structures, multiple layers are frequently applied to the substrate to provide additional protection. (Col. 1, lines 44-59)

Likewise, Feldman's earlier United States Patent No. 3,022,190 states:

An example of a woven fabric impregnated with sublimite is as follows:

A piece of fiberglass cloth is dipped in a slurry of the composition of Example 8, and dried. This fabric can be used as is, as a heat barrier, or it can be laminated with other fabrics or with rigid materials, to serve as reinforcing. Several sublimite impregnated fabrics or rigid materials, or both, may be laminated.

The part to be cooled can serve as one of the laminae. The laminations can be bonded by any suitable material, such as phenolic or epoxy resins. (Col. 7, lines 41-51)

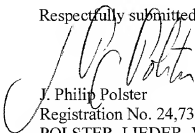
Absent applicant's present disclosure, the generalized statements in the Feldman '945 and '190 patents give no suggestion of the invention as claimed in independent claims 10, 35, 49 and 52. All of these claims call for a fabric coated, precoated, or treated with an active thermal protective material selected from the group consisting of subliming materials and intumescent materials. Each claim contains more than this. Thus, claim 10 calls for a composite material comprising at least one layer containing a thermoplastic, the layer having embedded therein a fabric, the fabric being coated with an active thermal protective material. Claim 35 calls for a structure comprising an organic resin having embedded therein a fabric, the fabric being precoated with an active thermal protective material. Claim 49 calls for a composite structure comprising a substrate formed at least in part of a thermoplastic material and a fabric coated with an active thermal protective material, the substrate adhering chemically and mechanically to the pretreated mesh fabric. Claim 52 calls for a composite structure comprising a substrate formed at least in part of a polyolefin, and a mesh fabric treated with an active thermal protective material, the treated mesh fabric having from 0.5 to 30 openings per square

centimeter, the substrate adhering chemically and mechanically to the pretreated mesh fabric.

Nothing in Horrocks et al., taken alone or in combination with Freeman et al. or Seizert, suggests that it would be desirable (or even possible) to substitute the Horrocks et al. composite non-woven (or equivalent) fabric barrier for the fiberglass of Seizert or Freeman et al. Likewise, nothing in either Feldman patent, taken alone or in combination with Freeman et al. or Seizert, suggests embedding a reinforcing fabric treated or coated with an active thermal protective composition in a substrate, or adhering the substrate chemically and mechanically to the pretreated mesh fabric. The only suggestion that the references be combined as called for in the claims comes from applicant's disclosure. The invention, as claimed, represents a dramatic, unexpected, and inventive improvement in the construction of the claimed structures. It is respectfully submitted that the claims as presented would not have been obvious to those skilled in the art at the time the invention was made in view of the prior art.

Should the Examiner have any questions or suggestions, he or she is urged to call applicants' undersigned attorney, J. Philip Polster, at 314-872-8118.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Philip Polster
Registration No. 24,739
POLSTER, LIEDER, WOODRUFF
& LUCCHESI, L.C.
763 South New Ballas Road
St. Louis, MO 63141
(314) 872-8118
(314) 991-2178 (fax)

METHODS OF MAKING HIGH-TEMPERATURE GLASS FIBER AND
THERMAL PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES

Technical Field

This invention relates to a glass form, preferably a fiber, which resists
5 high temperatures, at least 1900° F. (1038° C.) and higher, while retaining at
least some of its tensile strength and other physical properties. It also relates to
structures, including automotive structures, which can resist high temperature
for a predetermined time.

Background Art

10 In numerous applications, fabrics are utilized in systems which resist
high temperatures. An example of the use of such fabrics is in reinforced
coating systems. In these systems, the fabric is embedded in a char-forming,
fire-resistive coating such as those described in Deogon, U.S. Patent No.
5,591,791. Briefly, such coatings include ablative coatings, which swell to less
15 than twice their original thickness when exposed to fire or other thermal
extremes, intumescent coatings such as those disclosed in Nielsen et al., U.S.
Patent 2,680,077, Kaplan, U.S. Patent 3,284,216, Ward et al., U.S. Patent
4,529,467, or Deogon, U.S. Patent No. 5,591,791, which swell to produce a
char more than five times the original thickness of the coating, and subliming
20 char-forming coatings of the type disclosed in Feldman, U.S. Patent 3,849,178,
which undergo an endothermic phase change and expand two to five times their
original thickness to form a continuous porosity matrix. The intumescent and
subliming coatings are denoted "active" thermal protective coatings.

The time required for a given temperature rise across a predetermined
25 thickness of the composition, under specified heat flux, environmental, and
temperature conditions, is a measure of the composition's effectiveness in
providing thermal protection to an underlying substrate.

Eventually, the char is consumed by physical erosion and by chemical
processes, such as oxidation by oxygen in the air and by free radicals produced
30 by the coating or otherwise in a fire environment, and protection is substantially

reduced. Before the char is totally consumed, degradation of the char layer leaves it crumbled and without the necessary strength to sustain itself, causing it to fail by being blown off or simply falling off (spalling).

Some of these chars degrade rapidly during exposure to high
5 temperature, high heat flux environments. In the case of coatings which swell when exposed to thermal extremes, the degradations are usually in the form of fissures which are formed in the char as a result of differential thermal stresses produced by the high thermal gradients within the char, and differential thermal expansion between the virgin material and the char.

10 To increase the strength of char layers during exposure to thermal extremes, and to limit spalling and fissures, fabrics have long been incorporated in the coating materials. As set out in Feldman et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,622,774, fiberglass fabric provides an inexpensive, easy to install, reinforcement in many high temperature applications. In certain applications,
15 however, such as coatings which may be exposed to high velocity petroleum fires or to high-temperature, high heat flux fires which will raise the fabric to temperatures above the softening point of the glass (around 1600° F., 871° C.), the fiberglass fabric has disintegrated. Other fabrics have therefore been required. Graphite cloth, as taught in the foregoing Feldman et al. U.S. Patent
20 5,622,774 and in Kobayashi et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,401,793, is very expensive. Refractory materials, such as quartz (Refrasil) fabric is also expensive. Metal mesh is inexpensive but it is heavy and difficult to install, particularly because it generally requires welding metal studs to the substrate to be protected.

Other examples of fabric-reinforced systems are laminates in which the
25 fabric is embedded directly in a structural resin material itself, for example in the structure of a furnace or a rocket nozzle. Generally, these materials also produce a char when exposed to sufficiently high temperatures, although in many applications they are routinely exposed to high temperatures below their char-forming temperature for extended periods. In other applications they are
30 exposed for short periods to temperature, heat flux, and environmental

conditions which do not cause a char to form, but which are sufficiently high to cause serious loss of structural properties. Examples of these latter systems are automobile gasoline tanks and trunks, which can be made of plastic material (generally a thermoplastic material) if they can pass a test involving preventing structural failure (such as drop through in the case of a trunk or an explosion in the case of a gasoline tank) when the trunk or tank is placed over a fire of a specified temperature and intensity for a predetermined period such as two minutes. Also, other automotive components, such as trunk liners, parcel shelves, and interior door panels, are sometimes formed of felted natural or synthetic fibers having a thermoplastic binder or substrate. In all of these conditions, a fabric which resists complete degradation under the foregoing conditions can provide sufficient structural integrity to impede failure of the system. Other approaches to providing sufficient integrity to thermoplastic automotive components and other automotive components containing thermoplastic binders are also needed.

Attempts have been made for many years to produce a glass fiber which retains a substantial portion of its mechanical properties even when subjected to very high temperatures, greater than 1600° F. (871°C.), and preferably on the order of 1900° to 2000° F. (1038° to 1093° C.). Examples are Nordberg, U.S. Patent No. 2,461,841, Parker et al., U.S. Patent No. 2,491,761, and Leeg et al., U.S. Patent No. 2,992,960. These patents all involve leaching of the glass fiber with mineral acid, followed by treatment with a sizing material. Heretofore, such attempts have failed to provide a reliable, reproducible, and efficient process of converting commercial grade fiberglass (such as Type E and Type F glass fibers) into a material capable of withstanding elevated temperatures and aerodynamic shear which may be coupled with elevated temperatures.

Likewise, no economical, simple means is known for protecting thermoplastic and thermoplastic-containing structures, such as automotive components from high temperatures.

Summary of Invention

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, generally stated, a method of making a heat-resistant fiberglass fabric is provided comprising soaking a fiberglass fabric in a carefully selected acid bath for a selected time at a selected temperature. We have found that soaking the fiberglass in a mixture
5 of acids containing at least 15% sulfuric acid at room temperature for a period of more than twenty-four hours, preferably at least about forty-eight hours, produces a material which maintains a substantial part of its physical characteristics even when heated to a temperature of at least 1600° F. (871° C.) for a period of at least one hour. The molality of the mixed acids is below 8,
10 preferably around 5. It is anticipated that shorter soak times may be achieved with higher temperatures.

We have also found that the acid-treated fiberglass can be given superior qualities, such as improved "hand" (texture) both before and during exposure to high temperatures, by soaking the fiberglass in a low viscosity organo-metallic
15 material, such as a low molecular weight silicone to fill the pores of the glass. The silicone is preferably in the form of a water-in-oil emulsion of low molecular weight silicone, such as dimethyl polysiloxane. The use of a water-in-oil emulsion, rather than an oil-in-water emulsion, inhibits the formation of silicone micelles and enhances absorption of the silicone into the pores of the
20 glass fibers. We have found that soaking a fiberglass fabric for a period of more than forty-eight hours, preferably at least seventy-two hours, at room temperature in a low molecular weight, low viscosity, silicone bath produces superior results.

Certain combinations of acid treatment and treatment with low
25 molecular weight silicone have been found to produce materials which consistently will withstand being heated to a temperature of 1900° F. (1038° C.) for at least one hour in a muffle furnace.

The improved fabric has numerous uses, as will be apparent to those skilled in the art. It provides a superior reinforcement in thermal protective
30 coating systems of the types previously described. For example, it may be

embedded in fire-protective coatings of subliming, intumescent and ablative types, and has been found to provide excellent results as a reinforcement in sprayed-on subliming coating systems. It may also be used in active or passive cast or molded self-supporting thermal protective systems such as the system

5 described in Feldman, U.S. Patent No. 4,493,945.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, structural members formed of thermoplastic resins are strengthened and protected from fire for extended periods by incorporating in them a high-temperature fiberglass fabric made in accordance with the present invention. The fabric is preferably pressed

10 into a resin sheet as the sheet is formed into a container or other functional entity.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, generally stated, members formed at least in part of thermoplastic resins are strengthened and protected from fire or other hyperthermal conditions for extended periods

15 by incorporating in them a fabric or mesh which is pretreated with an active (intumescent or subliming) thermal protective coating material and then embedded in the thermoplastic material. The fabric is preferably a high-temperature fiberglass made by the method of the aforementioned parent application, although other fabrics including ordinary fiberglass, other inorganic

20 materials, synthetic polymeric materials and natural organic materials such as cotton may also be used. Preferably, the fabric comprises an open weave mesh having from 0.5 to 30 openings per square centimeter. The active fire retardant material can be impregnated into the fabric material or surface coated on the fabric. Preferably, a coating of from 100 to 1,000 grams per square meter is

25 applied. It can be completely cured in a rigid or elastic form; it can also be supplied in a precured condition or in a semi-cured condition to be cured during processing. The cells of the treated or impregnated fiberglass can be preferably open or may be filled. For some materials such as polypropylene, an open cell is preferred as it enables the softened polypropylene to pass through the opening

30 and form a mechanical lock. The pretreated fabric is preferably embedded in or

bonded to a surface of the substrate, generally the surface which is expected to be exposed directly to a flame or other hyperthermal condition.

- In accordance with a method of the invention, a composite structure is formed by pretreating a fabric with an active thermal protective material, placing the pretreated fabric in a mold, and bonding the pretreated fabric to a substrate while the substrate is being formed in the mold. In a preferred embodiment, the substrate is formed at least partly of a thermoplastic resin such as a polyolefin which is heated to a softening temperature and which adheres chemically and mechanically to the pretreated fabric in the mold during its molding process.

Brief Description of Drawing

FIG. 1 is a fragmentary top plan view of a thermal protective structure for use in practicing certain aspects of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a view in side elevation thereof.

- FIG. 3 is a somewhat diagrammatic sectional view showing a step in molding a composite container incorporating the structure of FIGS. 1 and 2 in accordance with one aspect of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a somewhat diagrammatic sectional view, corresponding to FIG. 3, showing another step in the process.

- FIG. 5 is a somewhat diagrammatic sectional view of the composite container formed in the process of FIGS. 3-4.

FIG. 6 is an exploded view showing the layers of a composite formed in accordance with another aspect of the present invention.

Best Modes for Carrying Out the Invention

- To determine the effect of different acid compositions and exposure times at a constant temperature and acid molality, and to determine the effect of further treatment in a low molecular weight polysiloxane at a constant temperature for different time periods, a series of tests was made. The results of these tests are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample	Acid Bath Mole Ratio	Time in Bath	Wt Change	Time in Silicone	Wt Change		Wt Change		Comments
					From orig	From acid	In muffle	From orig.	
No.	Cl NO ₃ SO ₄	Hr.	%	Hr.					
Blank							-12.44%	-12.44%	shrunken, melted
A-1	1 1 1	3	-0.08%	0	-0.08%	0.00%	-11.76%	-11.83%	fragile, crisp
A-2	1 1 1	3	-0.77%	6	5.82%	6.64%	-16.89%	-12.05%	slightly fragile
A-3	1 1 1	3	-0.34%	24	6.28%	6.63%	-17.40%	-12.22%	slightly fragile
A-4	1 1 1	3	0.00%	72	7.68%	7.68%	-17.38%	-11.04%	slightly fragile
A-5	1 1 1	8	-0.30%	0	-0.22%	0.08%	-13.80%	-13.98%	less fragile
A-6	1 1 1	8	-0.69%	6	5.66%	6.39%	-17.24%	-12.55%	less fragile
A-7	1 1 1	8	-0.35%	24	7.51%	7.89%	-18.56%	-12.44%	less fragile
A-8	1 1 1	8	-0.60%	72	7.01%	7.64%	-17.37%	-11.58%	very nice
A-9	1 1 1	24	-2.92%	0	-2.93%	-0.10%	-17.81%	-20.21%	less fragile
A-10	1 1 1	24	-3.88%	6	2.84%	6.83%	-21.10%	-18.86%	less fragile
A-11	1 1 1	24	-1.92%	24	6.92%	8.97%	-20.33%	-14.81%	less fragile
A-12	1 1 1	24	-2.12%	72	0.18%	2.30%	-20.07%	-19.92%	nice
A-13	1 1 1	48	-6.59%	0	-6.15%	0.04%	-23.14%	-27.86%	very nice - fuzzy
A-14	1 1 1	48	-7.04%	6	3.91%	11.22%	-26.89%	-24.03%	soft - fuzzy
A-15	1 1 1	48	-6.38%	24	3.98%	10.62%	-26.33%	-23.39%	very nice - fuzzy
A-16	1 1 1	48	-4.54%	72	-3.38%	1.00%	-26.16%	-28.66%	very nice - fuzzy
B-1	2 3 1	3	-0.25%	0	-0.27%	-0.02%	-10.58%	-10.82%	fragile
B-2	2 3 1	3	-0.39%	6	6.86%	7.28%	-14.91%	-9.07%	fragile
B-3	2 3 1	3	0.02%	24	6.01%	5.98%	-18.29%	-13.38%	fragile
B-4	2 3 1	3	-0.32%	72	7.62%	7.97%	-16.37%	-10.00%	less fragile
B-5	2 3 1	8	-0.85%	0	-0.79%	0.05%	-13.56%	-14.24%	fragile
B-6	2 3 1	8	-0.95%	6	4.26%	5.25%	-17.62%	-14.11%	less fragile
B-7	2 3 1	8	-1.10%	24	5.56%	6.71%	-15.79%	-11.11%	nice
B-8	2 3 1	8	-0.85%	72	5.48%	6.38%	-18.26%	-13.78%	slightly fragile
B-9	2 3 1	24	-5.47%	0	-5.27%	-0.10%	-16.44%	-20.85%	less fragile
B-10	2 3 1	24	-3.24%	6	1.86%	5.16%	-20.06%	-18.56%	nice
B-11	2 3 1	24	-4.40%	24	4.70%	9.31%	-20.89%	-17.18%	less fragile
B-12	2 3 1	24	-4.31%	72	0.79%	5.14%	-20.59%	-19.96%	nice
B-13	2 3 1	48	-10.86%	0	-9.58%	0.23%	-19.86%	-27.54%	very nice-fuzzy
B-14	2 3 1	48	-10.29%	6	1.02%	11.42%	-24.77%	-24.00%	nice - fuzzy
B-15	2 3 1	48	-9.63%	24	3.29%	13.24%	-24.99%	-22.52%	nice - fuzzy
B-16	2 3 1	48	-10.89%	72	-0.31%	10.54%	-24.76%	-24.99%	nice - fuzzy
C-1	4 2 1	3	-0.09%	0	-0.10%	-0.01%	-13.10%	-13.19%	fragile
C-2	4 2 1	3	0.00%	6	5.52%	5.52%	-16.48%	-11.87%	slightly fragile
C-3	4 2 1	3	-0.15%	24	7.62%	7.78%	-16.79%	-10.45%	less fragile

C-4	4	2	1	3	-0.08%	72	7.30%	7.39%	-18.17%	-12.20%	slightly fragile
C-5	4	2	1	8	-0.94%	0	-0.85%	0.07%	-13.07%	-13.81%	slightly fragile
C-6	4	2	1	8	-1.04%	6	4.57%	5.66%	-18.14%	-14.40%	less fragile
C-7	4	2	1	8	-0.67%	24	4.30%	4.99%	-18.83%	-15.34%	slightly fragile
C-8	4	2	1	8	-0.53%	72	4.78%	5.34%	-19.15%	-15.28%	slightly fragile
C-9	4	2	1	24	-4.83%	0	-4.63%	-0.02%	-16.68%	-20.54%	less fragile
C-10	4	2	1	24	-5.38%	6	1.54%	7.00%	-18.95%	-17.70%	slightly fragile
C-11	4	2	1	24	-5.18%	24	3.98%	9.36%	-19.70%	-16.50%	less fragile
C-12	4	2	1	24	-4.62%	72	1.52%	6.21%	-19.55%	-18.32%	less fragile
C-13	4	2	1	48	-11.42%	0	-	0.17%	-18.76%	-26.96%	nice
							10.10%				
C-14	4	2	1	48	-11.08%	6	1.59%	12.85%	-23.59%	-22.38%	less fragile
C-15	4	2	1	48	-10.30%	24	4.90%	15.71%	-25.06%	-21.38%	less fragile
C-16	4	2	1	48	-10.51%	72	0.06%	10.57%	-22.90%	-22.85%	less fragile
D-1	1	1	4	3	8.87%	0	1.78%	-7.24%	-15.64%	-14.14%	slightly fragile
D-2	1	1	4	3	1.56%	6	10.81%	9.08%	-17.73%	-8.84%	slightly fragile
D-3	1	1	4	3	0.88%	24	12.22%	11.23%	-16.50%	-6.30%	fragile
D-4	1	1	4	3	1.29%	72	9.14%	7.73%	-20.98%	-13.76%	fragile
D-5	1	1	4	8	1.32%	0	1.36%	0.02%	-15.18%	-14.03%	nice
D-6	1	1	4	8	0.77%	6	9.52%	8.67%	-21.82%	-14.38%	slightly fragile
D-7	1	1	4	8	0.27%	24	7.21%	6.93%	-19.01%	-13.17%	slightly fragile
D-8	1	1	4	8	0.58%	72	4.50%	3.90%	-19.29%	-15.66%	less fragile
D-9	1	1	4	24	1.45%	0	1.71%	0.24%	-18.33%	-16.93%	nice
D-10	1	1	4	24	0.63%	6	12.25%	11.54%	-22.71%	-13.25%	nice fuzzy
D-11	1	1	4	24	2.10%	24	12.89%	10.52%	-22.24%	-12.21%	nice fuzzy
D-12	1	1	4	24	2.69%	72	0.08%	-2.01%	-21.21%	-21.15%	nice
D-13	1	1	4	48	4.73%	0	8.04%	2.93%	-23.89%	-17.77%	nice
D-14	1	1	4	48	10.98%	6	18.84%	5.78%	-24.70%	-10.52%	soft fuzzy
D-15	1	1	4	48	10.92%	24	22.15%	8.80%	-24.48%	-7.75%	nice fuzzy
D-16	1	1	4	48	11.01%	72	-1.13%	-12.01%	-23.98%	-24.84%	nice fuzzy
E-1	1	0	4	3	0.29%	0	0.31%	0.02%	-11.51%	-11.23%	slightly fragile
E-2	1	0	4	3	0.54%	6	10.84%	10.25%	-18.64%	-9.82%	slightly fragile
E-3	1	0	4	3	0.46%	24	12.85%	12.33%	-18.33%	-7.84%	slightly fragile
E-4	1	0	4	3	0.56%	72	9.88%	9.27%	-21.75%	-14.02%	less fragile
E-5	1	0	4	8	2.41%	0	2.55%	0.08%	-17.69%	-15.60%	slightly fragile
E-6	1	0	4	8	2.64%	6	11.64%	8.70%	-18.82%	-9.37%	slightly fragile
E-7	1	0	4	8	3.02%	24	8.06%	4.80%	-18.54%	-11.97%	less fragile
E-8	1	0	4	8	3.49%	72	3.58%	-0.03%	-18.44%	-15.52%	slightly fragile
E-9	1	0	4	24	7.70%	0	8.08%	-0.24%	-22.04%	-15.74%	very nice
E-10	1	0	4	24	5.88%	6	14.80%	8.05%	-24.62%	-13.47%	soft fuzzy
E-11	1	0	4	24	7.78%	24	17.76%	9.78%	-24.16%	-10.69%	very nice

E-12	1	0	4	24	7.04%	72	-0.18%	-7.21%	-21.80%	-21.94%	nice fuzzy
E-13	1	0	4	48	10.58%	0	11.47%	-0.32%	-22.83%	-13.98%	soft fuzzy
E-14	1	0	4	48	8.31%	6	18.63%	8.78%	-25.45%	-11.56%	very nice fuzzy
E-15	1	0	4	48	11.11%	24	15.43%	2.62%	-25.56%	-14.07%	nice fuzzy
E-16	1	0	4	48	3.15%	72	0.37%	-2.79%	-24.33%	-24.05%	nice fuzzy
Examined E13, A15, B15, C15, D15 & E15											
E13 & E15 showed no visible differences under 30x microscope											
Weave threads of samples E13, E15 & D15 looked swollen											
These samples also had a softer "hand" and drooped more.											

In making these tests, the following procedure was followed.

- An acid bath was prepared by weighing the relative quantities of acid, mixing the acid thoroughly, and adding sufficient water to obtain a 5.0 molal solution. The selection of the 5.0 concentration was arbitrary, but it has been found that molalities of 8 or above do not function as well.

- Samples of the unraveled fiberglass material (Type E, J.P. Stevens Type 1353) were weighed and then totally immersed in the acid bath for the indicated number of hours.
- At the completion of each individual immersion period, the fiberglass sample was removed from the acid bath, carefully washed with clean water, dried, and weighed. This weight was compared to the weight of the sample in its virgin state.

- Some of the acid-treated fiberglass samples were then totally immersed in a bath of low molecular weight dimethyl polysiloxane in the form of a dispersion of water in the polysiloxane oil. The dispersion was formed from a concentrate of low molecular weight dimethyl polysiloxane in a water-in-oil emulsion, as sold by Blackhawk Specialty Products, Inc., Rock Island, Illinois, as its BSP-89W. The time spent in the silicone bath is recorded in Table 1 for each sample.

The sample was then placed in a muffle furnace which was maintained at a constant temperature of about 1600° F.(871° C.). This temperature was selected to represent a typical average temperature within a char layer which results from the exposure of a subliming or intumescent material which is

applied to a steel substrate in thicknesses that are capable of meeting relevant ASTM E-119 type fires for one, two, or more hours in duration.

The sample was kept in this environment for a period of about sixty minutes, then removed from the muffle furnace and cooled. Upon completion
5 of cooling, it was examined for embrittlement, "hand" retention, and weight loss. If the sample retained its "hand" (indicated by the word "nice" in the comments section of Table 1) then it was subjected to further tests. It will be seen from Table 1 that samples A-8, A-12 through A-16, B-7, B-10, B-11
10 through B-16, C-13, D-5, D-9 through D-16, and E-9 through E-16 met the foregoing criterion and were tested further. All of these samples were soaked in the room temperature acid for a period in excess of three hours. All but C-13 had been soaked in a mixture including in excess of 15% sulfuric acid.

Fresh samples taken from corresponding lots as the foregoing samples were further exposed to 1600° F. (871° C.) in the muffle furnace for a period of
15 sixty minutes. After cooldown, they were again checked for "hand retention," and results recorded. The samples which were embrittled were eliminated from further testing, leaving samples A-13 through A-16, D-13 through D-16, and E-13 through E-16 to be tested further.

Fresh samples taken from corresponding item lots as the foregoing
20 samples were exposed to a muffle furnace fire at a temperature of about 1900° F to about 2000° F (1038°-1093° C.) for a period of one hour. This temperature was selected because it represents a thermal environment most likely encountered within the char layer of a subliming or intumescent material which is exposed to a hydrocarbon fire environment as defined by Underwriters
25 Laboratory procedure 1709 or a jet fire environment as defined by British Offshore Technology Report OTO 93 028 (21 December 1993). After cooldown, the samples were checked for "hand" retention, and results were recorded. The three item samples which were not embrittled were A-16, D-13, and E-16. All the most successful samples had been soaked at room
30 temperature for over twenty-four hours in an acid solution containing in excess

of 15% molal sulfuric acid, and two of the three samples had been soaked at room temperature for over twenty-four hours in the low-viscosity silicone emulsion.

Preliminary fire tests of the treated fiberglass fabric in a subliming fire-
5 protective coating system indicate that the system provides superior results.

To further test the treated fabrics, and to demonstrate their usefulness in composite materials, the material was embedded in small (approximately 10 cm square) test polypropylene sheets as follows. In separate tests, two active fire protective materials were applied to the fabric: a subliming material (Thermal
10 Science, Inc., THERMO-LAG 440-1) and a thin-film subliming and intumescent material (Thermal Science, Inc. THERMO-LAG 2000). Both these materials are flexible epoxy polysulfide based materials containing a subliming agent. They both swell and undergo an endothermic phase change when exposed to hyperthermal conditions. The materials are formulated to provide
15 different amounts of swelling. In each case, the active thermal protective material was thinned in a solvent or low viscosity resin diluent. The treated fiberglass fabric was placed in a container of the thinned material and squeezed in a wringer to remove excess coating. As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, this produces a fabric 1 coated with material 3 to form a thermal protective structure
20 5. The coating 3 covers the fibers of the fabric 1 but does not close the individual cells in the fabric mesh, leaving openings 7. The coated fabric was heated to semicure the subliming material or to cure the intumescent material. The fiberglass remained somewhat elastic.

Polypropylene is a hard material with a surface that is difficult to adhere
25 to. As shown in FIGS 3-5, a molding process was utilized to embed the thermal protective structure 5 in a surface of a polypropylene sheet 11. The test square was heated to 200° to 210° C. The female portion 9 of a mold was heated to 60-70° C. The mold includes a ram with a platen 13 which is heated to 60-70° C. The thermoplastic square 11 was quickly placed into the mold with the
30 precoated fabric 5 on top of it, and the ram was moved quickly to mold the

plastic before a skin is formed on the plastic. The sample was removed from the mold. This process caused the polypropylene to exude through the openings in the woven fabric and physically lock the fabric to the plastic sheet, so that part of the fabric 5 was embedded in the sheet and part remained visible at the surface of the sheet, as shown in FIG. 5. Comparative flame tests without reinforcement, with untreated fiberglass, with treated fiberglass, and with treated fiberglass coated with each of the active thermal protective materials showed that the treated fiberglass systems provided substantial increases in time to failure, and the coated fiberglass provided dramatic increases in time to failure. The thermal protective structure 5 was oriented on the flame side in the tests.

Based on the foregoing tests, it is believed that the treated fiberglass fiber of the present invention can be embedded into thermoplastic structures by the same process of incorporation during the molding process. Other fibers, coated with active thermal protective materials, can also be embedded into thermoplastic structures. Composite sheets including the treated and/or coated fabric may also be formed either by passing a single heated thermoplastic sheet and a sheet of the fabric between heated rollers, or by sandwiching the fabric between sheets of thermoplastic. In other embodiments, the coating of material on the fabric does close the individual cells and creates a continuous sheet of thermally protective structure which is bonded more easily to the surface of a substrate when the thermally protective structure is not embedded in the substrate.

A polypropylene trunk base, for use in holding the spare tire of an automobile at the bottom of an automobile trunk, is one example of a structure formed by the foregoing processes. Such a trunk base can be formed as an open rectangular box by embedding a fabric, including the treated fabric of the present invention or a fabric coated or impregnated with an active thermal protective material, into a polypropylene sheet as the sheet is formed into the trunk base. Alternatively, one or more polypropylene sheets can be formed into

composites before the molding operation. A polypropylene automotive fuel tank may be formed by the same methods, by forming the tank as two open shells and welding the shells together or by blow-molding the tank in a mold which is lined with a fabric that has been treated or precoated with an active thermal protective material.

Likewise, various automotive structures may be formed of felted natural fibers, such as linen fibers, and reinforced by embedding or otherwise securing to a face of the liner a fabric that has been precoated with an active thermal protective material. Such felted natural fiber sheets are preferably formed with an organic polymer adhesive or binder which holds the fibers together and which aids in holding the precoated fabric to the sheet when it is molded. The polymer binder softens at a temperature below the activation temperature of the active thermal protective material. For example, the binder may be activated at a temperature of about 200° C. and the active thermal protective composition may be activated at a temperature of 280°C. to 350°C.

An example of such a structure is a trunk liner. A portion of such a liner is shown in FIG. 6, in exploded form. The liner 21 is formed from two flexible batts 23 and 25 of flax strands coated with a thermally activated binder material with two thin polyethylene layers 27 sandwiched between them. Such trunk liners are known, a commercial version being produced by Thermoplast Company of Idstein, Germany. A decorative carpet 33 is placed on the free side of the batt 25, as is conventional. The composite is then molded and compressed by alternately hot pressing and cold pressing in a mold of suitable dimensions at suitable temperatures for suitable periods of time, as is known in the art. The pressing processes soften the binder and form a thinner, rigid, shell having a thickness of about seven millimeters.

The conventional liner is greatly improved by the use of a thermal protective structure 28 formed of a fiberglass mesh 29 precoated with FIRE-SORB 2001 (Nu-Chem, Inc., Fenton, Missouri, USA) flexible subliming intumescent thermal protective coating 31. The thermal protective structure 28

is formed from ordinary (E-glass) fiberglass coated with 600 to 800 grams per square meter of subliming material, to give a structure 28 about one-half millimeter thick. The coating covers the openings and forms a continuous film in this embodiment. The subliming material is an epoxy polysulfide which
5 contains sublimers and other additives to make it flexible under the conditions of molding. The thermal protective structure 28 is laid over the batt 23. Optionally, a much thinner batt 35 of the flax material and binder is laid over the thermal protective structure 28. The protective structure 28 is laminated to the surface of the batt 23 using eighty bar pressure at a temperature of 220°C.
10 for twenty seconds. When the thinner batt 35 is overlaid on the protective structure 28, the same molding conditions are used. In the molding process, the thermal protective structure 28 becomes adhered to the batt 23. Because the shell will be placed in an automotive trunk with the inner portion of the shell facing in the direction of the fuel tank, the thermal protective structure 28 is on
15 the inside of the shell in this illustrative embodiment.

Tests of the liner structure 21 without the upper layer 35 show greatly lengthened times to failure when exposed to a 1,000°C. fire of controlled intensity. In the optional construction, the precoated mesh is hidden by the thin upper layer of compressed flax; under fire conditions, however, the upper layer
20 quickly burns off and exposes the active thermal protective material. In both cases, the active protective material expands to about eight times its original thickness (eight mm from an initial half mm) while absorbing energy and producing an open cell matrix through which the sublimed gasses transpire, to provide a greatly extended time to failure of the structure. Preliminary tests
25 indicate that a structure without the thermal protective structure 28 will fail under test conditions in less than forty-five seconds, while the protected structure of the present invention suffers little structural damage in over four minutes.

In applications where the structure is a container, the mesh is
30 illustratively a single piece which extends across a lower side of the bottom and

up at least a part of the outside of an upstanding wall of the structure. In any of these cases, the present invention provides greatly extended times to failure in standard tests involving placing the thermoplastic container or other automotive structure over a standard fire and in other standard tests.

- 5 As variations within the scope of the appended claims will be apparent to those skilled in the art, the foregoing description is set forth only for illustrative purposes and is not meant to be limiting. For example, other types of fiberglass may be treated in accordance with the invention. Other combinations of acids may be utilized. The acid bath may include additives, such as silicates for example. As previously noted, the time of acid or resin treatment may be reduced if the temperature of the bath is increased. Other
10 silicones and other low viscosity organo-metallic resins than silicones may be utilized in the post-acid bath treatment of the fiberglass. The treated fiberglass may be used in other high-temperature systems. For example, a composite material may be formed of at least one layer of thermoplastic having embedded therein fibers produced by the acid treatment method of the present invention. Also, a thermal protective composition may be produced having dispersed therein fibers produced by the acid treatment method of the present invention. Examples of such thermal protective compositions are a coating applied to a
15 substrate and a preformed self-supporting structure.

- The substrates of the composites of the invention may be formed of other polyolefins (such as polyethylene), other thermoplastics and even thermoset resins, and may be reinforced with various fibers. In the case of structures (mats) formed by pressing batts of fibers coated with adhesive
25 binders, the fibers are preferably natural (such as flax, hemp, or cotton), and the adhesive binder is also preferably recyclable. It will be understood that the binder may be activated by water or otherwise, rather than by heat, although heat-activated binders are presently greatly preferred. The substrate of the composite is preferably moldable into a sheet which is many times wider and
30 longer than its thickness, and the fabric is preferably adhered to the substrate

during the molding operation. It will be understood, however, that the composites may be formed by adhering the pretreated fabric to the substrate after the substrate is molded, although such a process is both slower and more complex than molding and adhering or embedding in a single step. The

5 composites may be formed into other structural containers and entirely other structures, such as other automotive elements (like package shelves and door facings), firewalls, and other high temperature barriers such as used on jet engines. The fabric to which the active thermal material is applied before being secured to the substrate is preferably fiberglass but may be other fabrics such as

10 those formed of threads or yarns of graphite, organic polymers (such as nylon, polyolefins, or acrylics), or natural fibers (like cotton or linen). The fabric may have a very loose weave (such as 0.5 openings per square centimeter) to a rather tight weave (such as thirty openings per square centimeter). The fabric is preferably a simple weave but may be knitted or woven in other known

15 manners. The fabric is precoated with an active thermal protective material which, when exposed to hyperthermal conditions, intumesces, sublimes, or preferably does both.

These variations are merely illustrative.

Claims

1. A method of treating fiberglass fiber to increase its resistance to heat, the method comprising treating the fiber with a mixture of acids comprising at least 15% sulfuric acid for a period sufficient to increase the softening point of the fiber to at least 1000° C.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the fiber is formed into a fabric before it is treated.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the acid mixture further comprises at least one other mineral acid.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the acid mixture comprises hydrochloric acid.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the fiber is E-glass.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the fiber is soaked in an acid bath for a period in excess of twenty-four hours.
7. The method of claim 2 comprising a further step of treating the fabric with a low viscosity resin after the acid treatment step.
8. The method of claim 7 wherein the resin is a silicone oil.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein the silicone oil is a water in oil emulsion.
10. A composite material comprising at least one layer containing a thermoplastic, the layer having embedded therein a fabric, the fabric being coated with an active thermal protective material selected from the group consisting of subliming materials and intumescent materials.
11. The composite of claim 10 wherein the coated fabric comprises an open mesh having from 0.5 to 30 openings per square centimeter, the thermoplastic in the layer extending into the openings and forming a mechanical lock with the coated fabric.
12. The composite of claim 10 wherein the fabric comprises fiberglass fiber having a softening point above about 850° C.

- 18 -

13. The composite of claim 10 wherein the active thermal protective material leaves openings in the weave of the fabric, the thermoplastic material extending into the openings and forming a physical lock with the coated fabric.
14. A container formed of the composite of claim 10.
- 5 15. The container of claim 14 wherein the container is a structural automotive container selected from the group consisting of trunk bases and fuel tanks.
16. A structural automotive component having a bottom and an upstanding wall, the pan being formed of the composite material of claim 10.
- 10 17. The component of claim 16 wherein the mesh is on a lower side of the bottom and the outside of the upstanding wall.
18. The component of claim 17 wherein the fabric mesh is a single piece of material extending across the bottom and up at least a part of the upstanding wall.
- 15 19. The component of claim 16 wherein the fabric comprises fiberglass fiber having a softening point above about 850° C.
20. The component of claim 19 wherein the fabric comprises fiberglass fiber having a softening point above about 1000° C.
21. The component of claim 20 wherein the fabric has been treated with a
- 20 mixture of acids comprising at least 15% sulfuric acid.
22. The component of claim 16 wherein the component is a trunk base.
23. The component of claim 16 wherein the component is a fuel tank.
24. The component of claim 16 wherein the component is an inverted pan formed in part of thermoplastic-coated fibers, the fabric mesh being embedded
- 25 in an inside surface of the pan.
25. A method of forming a composite structure comprising a step of coating a fabric with an active thermal protective material selected from the group consisting of subliming and intumescent materials, and thereafter a step of softening a resin component of a substrate and embedding the coated fabric in
- 30 the softened resin.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the substrate is a sheet, and wherein the sheet and the fabric are formed into a structure simultaneously with the step of embedding the fabric in the sheet.
27. The method of claim 25 wherein the active thermal protective material
5 leaves openings in the weave of the fabric, the softened resin extending into the openings and forming a physical lock with the coated fabric.
28. A composite material comprising at least one layer of thermoplastic having embedded therein a fabric produced by the method of claim 2.
29. A composite material comprising at least one layer of thermoplastic
10 having embedded therein fibers produced by the method of claim 1.
30. A thermal protective composition having dispersed therein fibers produced by the method of claim 1.
31. In combination, a thermal protective material and a fiberglass fabric embedded therein, the fabric having been treated by the method of claim 2.
- 15 32. The combination of claim 31 wherein the thermal protective material is a coating applied to a substrate.
33. The combination of claim 31 wherein the thermal protective composition is preformed into a self-supporting structure.
34. A method of protecting a substrate from fire or thermal extremes
20 comprising applying to the substrate an uncured thermal protective material selected from the group consisting of intumescent materials and subliming materials, and thereafter a step of embedding in the thermal protective material a fiberglass fabric produced by the method of claim 2.
35. A structure comprising an organic resin having embedded therein a
25 fabric, the fabric being precoated with an active thermal protective material selected from the group consisting of subliming and intumescent materials.
36. The structure of claim 35 wherein the organic resin is a polyolefin.
37. A method of treating fiberglass fiber to give it superior high temperature resistance and texture, the method comprising treating the fiber with acid and

- 20 -

thereafter soaking the fiber in a water-in-oil emulsion of low viscosity organo-metallic oil to fill pores in the glass.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein the low viscosity organo-metallic oil is a low molecular weight silicone oil.
- 5 39. The method of claim 38 wherein the silicone is dimethyl polysiloxane.
40. The method of claim 37 wherein the step of treating the fiber with acid comprises treating the fiber with a mixture of acids comprising at least 15% sulfuric acid for a period sufficient to increase the softening point of the fiber to at least 1000° C.
- 10 41. A method of forming a composite structure comprising a step of treating a fabric with an active thermal protective material selected from the group consisting of subliming and intumescent materials, a step of placing the treated fabric in a mold, and a step of forming a substrate into a shape in the mold containing the treated fabric.
- 15 42. The method of claim 41 wherein the substrate comprises a thermoplastic resin; the step of forming the substrate comprising heating the resin at least to a softening temperature, the treated fabric bonding to the softened resin.
43. The method of claim 41 wherein the substrate is heated to a temperature below an activation temperature at which the active thermal protective material
- 20 intumesces or sublimes.
44. The method of claim 41 wherein the fabric comprises fiberglass.
45. The method of claim 41 wherein the substrate comprises a felted material.
46. The method of claim 41 wherein the coated fabric includes windows
- 25 therein, the substrate extending through the windows to lock the coated fabric to the substrate.
47. The method of claim 41 wherein the structure is an automotive trunk base, or trunk liner, or fuel tank.
48. The method of claim 41 wherein the resin comprises a polyolefin.

- 21 -

49. A composite structure comprising a substrate, the substrate being formed at least in part of a thermoplastic material, and a thermal protective structure adhered to the substrate, the thermal protective structure comprising a fabric coated with an active thermal protective material, the thermal protective material being selected from the group consisting of subliming and intumescent materials, the substrate adhering chemically and mechanically to the pretreated mesh fabric.
50. The structure of claim 49 wherein the thermal protective structure is adhered to the substrate by the thermoplastic material.
- 10 51. The structure of claim 49 wherein the thermal protective structure is embedded in the thermoplastic material.
52. A composite structure comprising a substrate, the substrate being formed at least in part of a polyolefin, and a mesh fabric treated with an active thermal protective material, the thermal protective material being selected from the group consisting of subliming and intumescent materials, the treated mesh fabric having from 0.5 to 30 openings per square centimeter, the resin adhering chemically and mechanically to the pretreated mesh fabric.
- 15 53. The structure of claim 52 wherein the polyolefin is polypropylene.

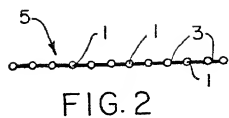
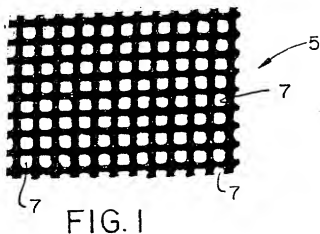


FIG. 3

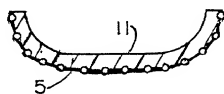
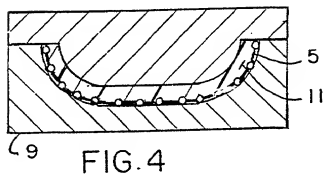
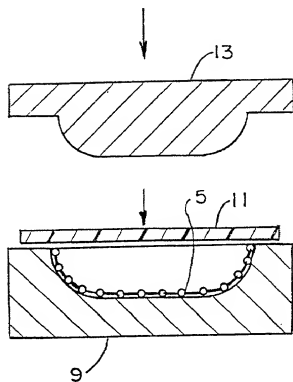
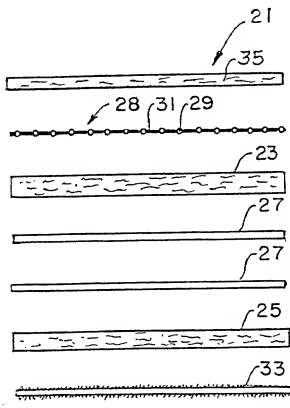


FIG. 6



**DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR PATENT APPLICATION
(Attorney Docket 7387)**

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that: My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name. I believe I am the original, first, and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled (AS AMENDED) THERMAL PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES AND METHODS OF MAKING THEM, the specification of which was described and claimed in PCT International Application No. PCT/US98/14775, filed July 16, 1998 and as amended under Article 34.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims. Malkit S. Deogon is an inventor of the invention as originally claimed in some claims of said PCT application, but is not an inventor of the U.S. national stage application as amended by preliminary amendment.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56(a).

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) or PCT International applications listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application.

U.S. Serial No. 08/895,918 Filed July 17, 1997 Now U.S. Patent 6,001,437

PCT/US98/14775 Filed July 16, 1998

I hereby appoint the following attorneys to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: Philip B. Polster, Reg. No. 16,554, Frederick M. Woodruff, Reg. No. 15,301, J. Philip Polster, Reg. No. 24,739, Lionel L. Lucchesi, Reg. No. 25,891, William G. Bruns, Reg. No. 19,541, Edward A. Boeschstein, Reg. No. 22,986, William B. Cunningham, Jr., Reg. No. 26,155, Ralph B. Brick, Reg. No. 17,444, McPherson D. Moore, Reg. No. 28,449, J. Joseph Muller, Reg. No. 28,450, , Jonathan P. Soifer, Reg. No. 34,932, Ned W. Randle, Reg. No. 35,989, Martha A. Michaels, Reg. No. 20,453, Mark E. Books, Reg. No. 40,918, Catherine W. Wall, Reg. No. 42,209, David H. Chervitz, Reg. No. 32,820, Ronald W. Hind, Reg. No. 24,643, Tara A. Nealy, Reg. No. 42,927 and Nelson D. Nolte, Reg. No. 42,938.

Direct all telephone calls to J. Philip Polster at Telephone No. (314) 872-8118.



ADDED PAGE TO COMBINED DECLARATION
AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR SIGNATURE BY JOINT INVENTOR(S)
ON BEHALF OF NONSIGNING INVENTOR(S) WHO REFUSE(S)
TO SIGN OR CANNOT BE REACHED (37 CFR 1.47(a))

We, the above named joint inventors, have signed this declaration on our own behalf and also sign this declaration under 37 CFR 1.47(a) on behalf of the nonsigning joint inventor, particulars for whom are:

Full name of (first, second, etc.) Malkit S. Deogon
nonsigning inventor who

☒ refuses to sign

☐ cannot be found or reached

United Kingdom

Country of Citizenship of nonsigning inventor

23 Vicrage Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3HB, ENGLAND

Last known address of nonsigning inventor

Allen

Allen W. Thorpe

(Type or print name of joint inventor
signing on behalf of nonsigning
inventor)

Allen W Thorpe

Signature

11-06-2001

Date

Edward W. Taylor, Jr.

(Type or print name of joint inventor
signing on behalf of nonsigning
inventor)

[Signature]

Signature

11-6-01

Date

Rubin Feldman

(Type or print name of joint inventor
signing on behalf of nonsigning
inventor)

[Signature]

Signature

11-6-01

Date

Address all correspondence to Customer Number 001688.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of First Inventor:

1-0 Allen W. Thorpe

Inventor's Signature:

Allen W Thorpe Date: 11-06-2001

Residence:

City of Olivette

Citizenship:

United States of America

Post Office Address:

9458 La Jolla
Olivette, Missouri 63132 MO

Full name of Second Inventor:

2-0 Edward W. Taylor, Jr.

Inventor's Signature:

Edward W Taylor Jr Date: 11-6-01

Residence:

City of Ballwin

Citizenship:

United States of America

Post Office Address:

181 Tortuna Drive
Ballwin, Missouri 63021 MO

Full name of Third Inventor:

3-0 Rubin Feldman

Inventor's Signature:

Rubin Feldman Date: 11-6-01

Residence:

City of Ladue

Citizenship:

United States of America

Post Office Address:

28 Sommerset Downs
Ladue, Missouri 63124 MO

Full name of Fourth Inventor:

4-0 Malkit S. Deogon

Inventor's Signature:

[REFUSES TO SIGN] Date: _____

Residence:

City of Birmingham

Citizenship:

United Kingdom

Post Office Address:

23 Vicrage Road
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3HB
United Kingdom GBN